



EXCURSION

PLANNED FOR THE

CITY HISTORY CLUB

OF

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BY

FRANK BERGEN KELLEY, A. M., Ph. D.

No. VIII—HISTORIC BROOKLYN—PART ONE.



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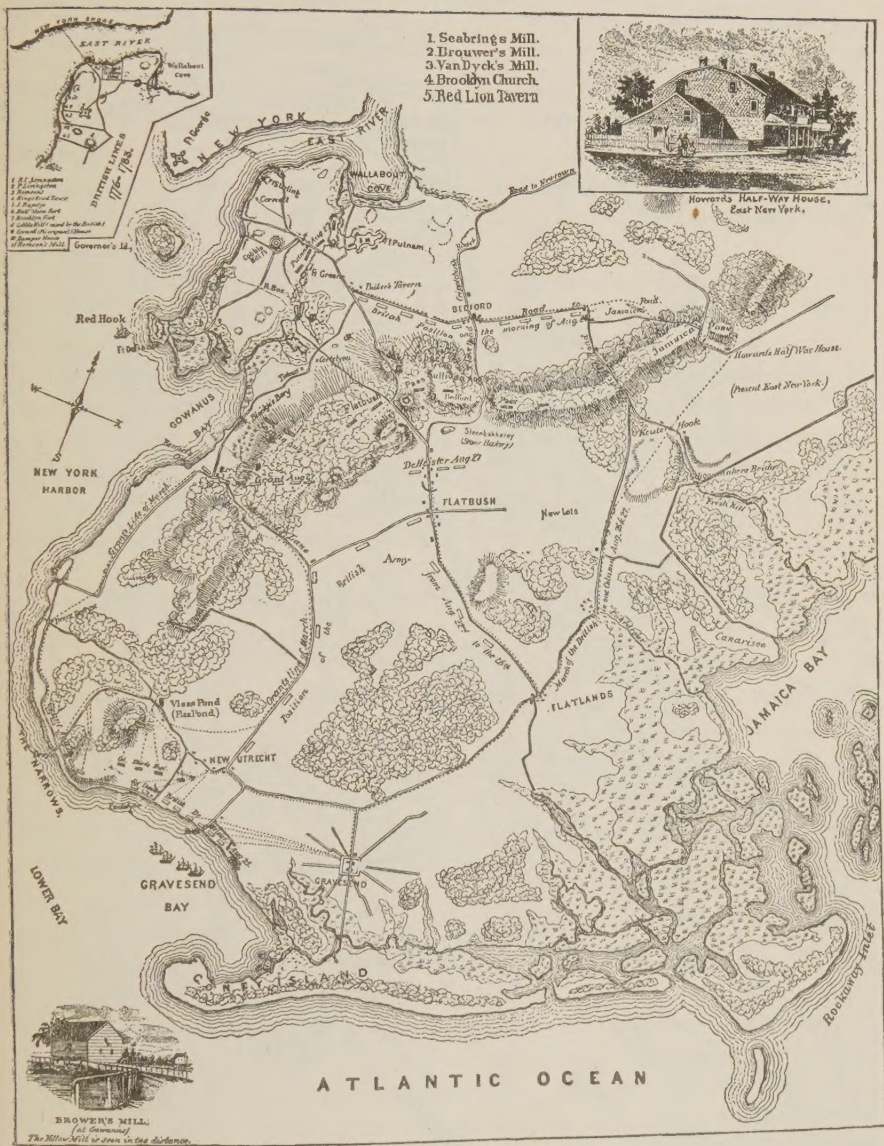
The City History Club of New York was founded in 1896, partly to awaken interest in the traditions of the City. To that end a series of historical excursions was planned which, from time to time, it has been found necessary to revise in order (1) to correct blunders due to misinformation, of which even standard books on New York history are full; (2) to keep pace with the march of improvements whereby the topography of the City is constantly changing; and (3) to add material as new light is shed on the past and as new tablets and monuments are erected to mark historic sites.

Interest in City history has been awakened since the organization of the Club, and many writers have devoted their time to research and discription of life in old New York. The following books will be most helpful to those beginning the study of local history: Todd's "Story of New York" (Putnam); Goodwin's "Historic New York" (two bound volumes composed of 24 monographs; "The Half Moon Series," which may be purchased separately (Putnam); Hemstreet's "Literary Landmarks of New York" (Putnam); Janvier's "In Old New York" (Harper); Hemstreet's "Nooks and Corners of Old New York"; "When Old New York Was Young" (Scribner); Innes' "New Amsterdam and Its People" (Scribner); Ulmann's "Landmark History of New York" (Appleton); R. R. Wilson's "New York Old and New" (Lippincott); reproductions of noted historical maps and pictures of old New York (Dunreath Publishing Co., 46 Wall St.). August R. Ohman, 97-101 Warren St., publishes the best modern maps of New York. See also the list of Club publications on page 12.

The following books are of special value for students of Brooklyn history: Stiles' "History of Brooklyn" and Stiles' "The County of Kings and City of Brooklyn" (W. W. Munsell & Co.)

Johnston's "Campaigns of 1776 around New York and Brooklyn" (L. I. Society Memoirs); McCloskey's "Manual of the Common Council of Brooklyn"; R. R. Wilson's "Historic Long Island" (The Berkeley Press); Dr. Strong's "History of the Town of Flatbush"; Mrs. G. L. Vanderbilt's "Social History of Flatbush" (Appleton).

Object.—"The City History Club has for its object the study of the history of the City of New York, in the hope of awakening an interest in its traditions and in the possibilities of its future, such educational work being for the improvement, uplifting and civic betterment of the community."



MAP No. I: BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND.

By permission from Stiles' "The County of Kings and City of Brooklyn," published by W. W. Munsell.



MAP No. II: HISTORIC BROOKLYN, 1904.

To illustrate Excursion No. VIII, Sections I and II.
 (Adapted from the New Map of the Borough of Brooklyn, by courtesy of August R. Ohman, Map Publisher and Engineer, 97 Warren St., New York City.)

EXCURSION No. VIII.

HISTORIC BROOKLYN: PART ONE.

The City History Club of New York has long been planning excursions through historic sections of Brooklyn, but it has been difficult to locate many of the old landmarks, as very little, and that largely out of date, has been written on the subject. Moreover, during the rapid growth of the borough during the last few years, many historic houses have been destroyed.

This leaflet deals chiefly with those sections lying south of Fulton Street, the special study of Bushwick, Williamsburgh, Greenpoint, etc., being reserved for a later Excursion.

The co-operation of all students of local history is desired, in order to correct errors in this leaflet and to add new points of interest in connection with the routes herein described and with later trips to be arranged through other parts of Brooklyn and in Queens. All such material will be gladly received by the Club, and it will be of special value if an exact description of the location and means of reaching it are added.

SECTION I. FULTON FERRY TO BOROUGH HALL.

(The figures correspond with those on Map I, p. 4.)

(1.) **Fulton Ferry**, begun as a rowboat ferry (1642) to Peck Slip, Cornelis Dircksen (Hooglant), ferryman. Flatboats were used for the transportation of cattle, and the later boats were operated by sails and horse-power until Robert Fulton's steam ferryboats were used about 1814. **Fulton Street** is the original road leading from "Ferry Village" to "Breuckelen," which was a settlement (1636) near Hoyt Street, and became an incorporated village in 1816 and a city in 1834. The road, at first a narrow lane, was ordered regularly laid out (1704) to East Hampton and was to be four rods wide. It became part of the first post road through Long Island in 1764 and was widened in 1839.

(2.) **Brooklyn Heights** was the center of the residence section of old Ferry Village. As this Excursion describes chiefly historic houses still in existence and as few important landmarks remain here, the student is referred to Stiles' "History of Kings County," pp. 105-139, and Stiles' "History of Brooklyn," Vol. II, chap. 2, for some interesting itineraries through the old streets of Ferry Village in 1816.

(3.) **Public School No. 1**, at Concord and Adams Streets, site of the first district school of Brooklyn (1816, rebuilt 1842), where also was held the first (union) Brooklyn Sunday School in 1816. See **tablet**.

(4.) **St. James Church**, Jay and Chapel Streets, the first Roman Catholic Church on Long Island (organized 1822). See **tablet** and **bust** of the founder, Peter Turner.

(5.) The **L. I. Historical Society** building at Clinton and Pierrepont Streets (open to the public); it contains many objects of historical interest, besides valuable books and documents. Its "Department of Natural History of Long Island" is full of interest.

(6.) **Brooklyn Borough Hall** (begun 1836, completed 1849), is the original City Hall of Brooklyn. See in front of it the **statue** of Henry Ward Beecher. The space behind the hall was once occupied by a military garden.

SECTION II. FULTON STREET, FORT GREENE PARK AND THE NAVY YARD.

(7.) Site of the **first Dutch Church** of Brooklyn, the middle of Fulton, near Lawrence Street. It was erected in 1666, rebuilt 1766, and removed to Joralemon Street in 1807.

(8.) **Tablet**, erected by the Sons of the Revolution, on the Smith Gray Building, Fulton Street, corner of Flatbush Avenue, to mark the line of defence in the battle of Long Island "from the Wallabout to the Gowanus." Near by is the site of Labon's Inn, a road-house of Revolutionary days which was occupied by the Hessians.

(9.) **Martyrs' Tomb**, Fort Greene Park (opposite Elliott Place), contains the remains of 11,000 Americans who died in the prison ships in the Wallabout. A monument is soon to be erected over the vault. Ft. Putnam stood here during the Revolution, the name being changed to Fort Greene during the War of 1812.

(10.) **Brooklyn Navy Yard** (entrance opposite Sands Street), established 1801. Here may be seen historic cannon and memorials of early wars. The surrounding region was known as **The Wallabout** (Waal-boght, meaning "bay of foreigners") and was settled in 1637 by Joris Jansen de Rapelje and other "Walloons" or Huguenots who had fled to Holland for refuge.

In Wallabout Bay were located the infamous **Jersey** and other prison ships during the Revolution, and near by in a vault, just outside the Navy Yard, rested the bones of the prisoners until removed in 1873 to Fort Greene Park.

SECTION III. REVOLUTIONARY TRACES. A. NEW UTRECHT.

Take 5th Avenue Elevated R.R. to Fort Hamilton.

N. B. *En route* to Fort Hamilton see the **tablet**, erected by the Sons of the Revolution, at 5th Avenue and 3d Street (near Elevated R.R. station), to commemorate the Vechte-Cortelyou House, built 1699 by Claes Adrientie van Vechten and later occupied by Jacques Cortelyou.

Here Lord Stirling made his famous defence during the Battle of Long Island. This house and others nearly as famous, including the Bennett-Schermerhorn House at 3d Avenue, near 26th Street (erected in the 17th Century on the site of the original house built by Bennett, the pioneer of "The Gowanus"), and the De Hart-Bergen House at 3d Avenue, near 37th Street (erected before 1679 by Simon Aertsen and described in the *Labadist Journal*) have only recently disappeared.

New Utrecht was one of the five Dutch towns of Kings County and was settled about 1654-7 by Jacques Cortelyou whose house (used as Howe's headquarters) stood in the Fort Hamilton grounds until lately. Here at **The Narrows** Verrazano first saw New York Harbor and Hudson's men landed just below on Coney Island to bury the body of John Colman.

At Denyse's Ferry (near the foot of Bay 9th) the British landed August 22, 1776. The scenery has changed very little since that day.

The military works at **Fort Hamilton** were begun 1808 by Mayor De-witt Clinton, and the present fort was constructed in 1825-31.

Fort Lafayette originated as "Fort Diamond" on Diamond Reef during the War of 1812 and its name was changed about 1825 to honor the French hero, who was then visiting New York. During the Civil War it was used as a military prison. The interior was burned in 1868, and it has since been used for the storage of ordnance, etc.

Go up 16th Avenue to 84th Street and walk East.

See several **Dutch houses** (one at No. 1750, said to have been a British officer's quarters), and the **Dutch churchyard**, where now stands St. John's Lutheran Church. The New Utrecht Reformed Church occupied this site (1700-1828) until the **new church** was erected at 18th Avenue. See **tablet** on this building and in front a flag pole on which is fastened a **tablet** to commemorate the original "liberty pole" erected here in 1783. See the **Van Pelt Manor House** and an old **mile-stone** occupying the corner of 82d Street and 18th Avenue.

B. PROSPECT PARK.

(The figures correspond with those on Map II, p. 11; see also page 3.)

(11.) **Battle Pass Tablet** (on the east drive near the public playgrounds), to mark Valley Grove and the outer line of defence in the Battle of Brooklyn. The chief part of the battle was fought in the region now included in Prospect Park.

(12.) **Maryland Monument**, on Lookout Hill, erected through the efforts of the Maryland Society, Sons of the American Revolution, to honor "Maryland's Four Hundred," who, on this battlefield, August 27, 1776, saved the American Army.

For full accounts of the Battle of Long Island see Stiles' and Johnston's works (p. 2).

SECTION IV. A. FLATBUSH.

(The figures refer to Map No. III, p. 11.)

Settled by the Dutch in 1651; called Midwout, Midwoud, Medwoud; later, Vlacte Bos ("wooded plain").

Take Brighton Beach train to Prospect Park, or surface car to Flatbush Avenue and Maple Street.

The old town extended from just north of this point south to Paerdegat Avenue (Ave. E). Flatbush Avenue was the old village street and along its stretch of two miles may be seen a number of old houses of Dutch architecture. The Bedford Road met Flatbush Avenue near the north end of the town and the two roads branched out to Brooklyn and old Bedford Village respectively.

Route south on Flatbush Avenue E. and W. refer to the side of the street on which the house is situated.

(13.) **Lefferts Homestead** (pre-Revolutionary), E. corner of Maple Street.

(14.) **Vanderbilt Homestead** (about 1790), W. opp. Rutland Street. See Dutch oven and fireplace in the cellar.

(15.) **Birdsall House**, W. No. 612, famous for its ivy and garden.

(16.) *Site of Melrose Hall* (Built 1750), E. cor. of Winthrop Street; noted for its legends.

(17.) **Flatbush Dutch Reformed Church**, W. cor. of Church Avenue; built 1793-6 on foundations of the second Church (1698), which was on the

site of the original building erected in 1654, this being the oldest church on Long Island. See **tablet** erected by the Colonial Daughters of the 17th Century. In early days the dead were buried beneath the church, and for many years no tombstones were used for fear of attracting the attention of the Indians. In a part of the yard unmarked by stones lie the remains of many who died in the Battle of Long Island. The church was used by the British as a military prison. Many of the epitaphs are in Dutch.

(18.) **Erasmus Hall High School** (formerly Academy), E. near Erasmus Street; built 1786 by private subscription (Hamilton and Burr contributing), and chartered by the Regents 1787. Wm. Alex. Duer, son of Lady Kitty Duer, was an early graduate; in 1797 John Henry Livingston, first Theological Professor of the Reformed Church, was its head. It became a public high school in 1896, and is now being greatly enlarged.

(19.) The old **Striker House** is at 2243 Church Avenue, just a short distance east of Flatbush Avenue.

(20.) Site of **J. C. Bergen House**, N. W. cor. of Albemarle Road, built 1735. When occupied by David Clarkson in 1776 it was sacked by the British, and later it was used as a military prison. The house was torn down about 1902, but the foundations may still be seen.

(21.) **Duryee House**, E. bet. Vernon Street and Duryee Place, was occupied by Lord Stirling in the Revolution; much changed in appearance.

(22.) **Lott House**, W. (1084 Flatbush Ave.). See outdoor kitchen with Dutch chimney, probably used by the slaves.

(23.) **Vanderveer Homestead**, E. (No. 1159) near Avenue C; built 1787 (or 1798) on the site of an earlier house. The land on which the house stands was granted to the ancestor of the present owner in 1660 by Gov. Stuyvesant. See quaint hall and door and the great barn of probably a much earlier date.

(24.) **John Ditmas' House**, W. just opposite, of unusual Dutch architecture (gable-end not turned to the street).

(25.) **Henry S. Ditmas House**, W. bet. Foster and Newkirk Avenues; built about 1800; notice Dutch door.

(26.) **Cortelyou-Vanderveer House**, E. (No. 1249) near Glenwood Road. Just east of it was the well-known *Vanderveer Mill* bet. Paerdegat Pond and Canarsie Lane. This was the first Long Island windmill, and was built 1804. It was used as a refuge for negroes during the Draft Riots.

B. FLATLANDS.

In "Nieu Amersfoort," the Dutch name for Flatlands, was established 1624 the first Dutch plantation on Long Island. The Canarsie Indians occupied this region, and in the great shell heaps at Canarsie and at Bergen Beach may be found traces of their wampum industry. Here the Indians and their Dutch successors raised crops of maize on the "Great Flats on Flatlands Plains." The "Indian Path" ran from Brooklyn Ferry to Bergen Island following in part the "King's Highway" of to-day. The first patent recorded was in 1636 to Andreas Hudde, and a local court was established in 1654. This region resembles Holland in its general flatness, marshiness, dikes and creeks, and its outlook over salt meadows and Jamaica Bay, which is often dotted with slow-moving sailing vessels.

Take surface cars down Flatbush Avenue to King's Highway.

(27.) **Flatlands Church**, built 1847-8, on the site of former buildings of 1662 and 1794. Some of the original colonial furniture is in the manse. Near the church is the old **graveyard** and the old **school** on the original school lot. Notice the new public school just north. Several Dutch houses and old barns may be seen in the neighborhood.

Continue on the car or walk South on Flatbush Avenue and East on Avenue N to Mill Lane. Go South to

(28.) **Schenck-Crooke House**, built about 1650. See the great rafters which are built ship fashion and the old fireplaces.

Return to Avenue N and walk or ride East to the

(28a.) **Bergen Homestead** on E. 72d Street (Bergen Beach), built about 250 years ago. See the old fireplaces, Dutch door and knocker.

C. NEW LOTS AND CANARSIE.

Take Church Avenue car from Flatbush Avenue to Rockaway Avenue: go east on New Lots Road; or take East New York Elevated R. R. to Pennsylvania Avenue and walk south to New Lots Road.

(29.) **Wyckoff House**, near Remsen Place and Canarsie Lane (take Church Avenue car to Remsen Place). The house was built in 1664 and has been but slightly changed. The Wyckoff family still occupy the house and have many heirlooms of Dutch days.

(30.) **The Van Sinderen House** (corner of Junius Street), over 200 years old, gambrel roofed, altered within, but contains old Dutch furniture.

(31.) **Snedeker House** (two blocks further east), about 155 years old, has characteristic Dutch doors.

(32.) **Rapelje House** (No. 349 New Lots Road, still further east), 175 years old and in good repair. Some of the old shingles remain. In the parlor Ethan Allen was entertained by Major Rapelje.



MAP No. III: HISTORIC BROOKLYN, 1904.

To illustrate Excursion No. VIII, Sections III and IV.
 (Adapted from the New Map of the Borough of Brooklyn, by courtesy of August R. Ohman, Map Publisher and Engineer, 97 Warren St., New York City.)

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